Town Population Projections 2017-2032
Governor's Office of Policy and Management
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Town population projections are calculated using two pieces of information:

1. The recent historical growth of each town's share of its county's population and

2. County population projections.

The projections use linear regression analysis to estimate a constant rate of growth for each town's share of their county population between 2008 and 2012. This growth rate is then extrapolated into the future, using county population projections to project the population for each town in 2017, 2022, 2027, and 2032.

This method produces some results that may seem counterintuitive. For example, your town may be projected to shrink between 2012 and 2017, even though it showed historical population growth and your county is expected to grow from 2012 to 2017. Keep in mind that the population projections for your town are based on changes in its share of your county's population. Your town's share of the county population may be declining even though your town and the county have both been growing in population. The town population projections thus rest on the assumption (among many others, including those upon which the county population projections are based) that relative growth rates of towns in a given county will continue into the future.

Let's look at an example. Portland is Maine's largest city. Its population grew slowly but steadily from 2002 through 2012. Cumberland County also grew during that time period and Cumberland County is projected to continue growing through 2022. Why do the projections show Portland losing population from 2012 to 2017 and beyond? Two factors:

1. Portland's share of Cumberland County's population has been decreasing and the population projections are based on the assumption that this trend will continue into the future.

2. Cumberland County's population is growing, but it is growing at a slower and slower rate every year and is projected to start declining after 2022. So, starting in the 2012 to 2017 period, the rate at which Portland's share of Cumberland County is declining will outpace overall population growth in Cumberland County and cause Portland's population to begin shrinking.

These town population projections must be interpreted with caution. They are based on assumptions and past trends that may or may not hold into the future. In some ways, these population projections represent what will happen under a business-as-usual scenario where all the moving pieces (including migration rates, life expectancies, and sprawl patterns) continue on their current trajectories.

These projections also, by necessity, use a single methodology applied to all towns. Results may be better for some types of towns than others. Towns with smaller populations or dramatic population changes may find their projections less reliable than projections for towns with a larger, stable population. Note that some towns with population fewer than five in all three years of observations have been excluded, so town totals may not sum to county totals. In addition, two towns required further adjustment to avoid unreasonable declines: Winter Harbor and Caratunk.

Use these projections as a starting point for your planning and adjust them as you see fit. Do not hesitate to contact the State Economist at the Office of Policy and Management if you have questions or concerns about these projections.